

Letter 25

3-28-26

It's Not Denial

I wouldn't call it unhealthy or controlling, the warden and I have a wonderful relationship. I mean, sure she's had issues with guys in the past and that makes her take precautions, but I wouldn't call it a controlling relationship... right?

She reads all of my text messages, but that's just to make sure I'm not thinking about leaving. I'm allowed to say almost anything I want. I can message nearly anyone and only a few subjects are off limits. People are even allowed to send me pictures, as long as they are approved.

She doesn't listen to my phone calls, at least not every time. I think. It would be okay if she did anyway, I'm careful about what I say.

Of course, there are video cameras; they are only there to make sure things are okay. She probably doesn't even look at the videos. Just in case, I make sure I'm in the approved places at the correct times. That's not her being controlling, just careful. Somebody in the past probably did something bad and it makes sense to make sure I don't do the same thing.

Just because there is a list of people I'm allowed to see doesn't mean anything. I could have requested anyone and she probably would have approved it. Who really needs more than four friends anyway?

She isn't trying to keep me isolated, that's something cults do. This obviously isn't a cult, there would be more Kool-Aid if so. Well, there is Kool-Aid with every meal, but nobody makes me drink it, so it's definitely not a cult.

It's just a regular relationship that is not controlling.

I like these clothes. I just didn't realize that I liked orange until she gave it to me. It would be rude to not wear a gift.

She never tells me what to eat. Sure, there is no choice in which food I get and I don't get to make suggestions, but she never forces me to eat it.

Besides, she isn't even around all the time watching me. That would be controlling! Yeah, she has others check on me when she's away, but that's just to make sure I don't need anything.

While this certainly isn't a controlling relationship, I do have one worry; there might be other guys, I don't think I'm the only one.

Letter 26

3-30-26

Coffee

9 a.m. every morning is my coffee time. I resisted this for the first month that I was here. This seemed like the perfect time and place to kick any caffeine dependence.

I never stopped missing it. Not just the caffeine, but the ritual of having a cup of coffee and collecting my thoughts for the day. Finally, I broke down and asked someone to make a cup for me. I would have a test cup before investing in an overpriced habit.

That test cup was terrible. It tasted like the guy at the motel had to pay out of pocket to refill the coffee maker. So, he just re-ran the old grounds one more time. However, he did it clumsily, so he got a handful of used, cheap grounds in the pot too. Despite this, I wanted more.

I told my thoughts to Starbuck, my jailhouse barista. He said there is a better version, coffee cut with half a packet of cappuccino, also available on commissary. The next day I tried this variation and I was hooked.

My morning ritual is to start the hot water shortly before 9 a.m. Then I measure out a half packet of vanilla cappuccino and a little less than that amount of instant coffee. I add water to my plastic tumbler while simultaneously flushing the toilet, as this makes the sink water run temporarily hotter. Once I have the perfect amount of water, four and a half fingers, I add both powders. The result is forty-five calories, about one dollar per day, and tasty enough.

My morning routine also includes a multivitamin, of course, from commissary. These taste like they were plucked directly from a goat's asshole, so I prefer to take them with coffee because it's the only thing strong enough to mask the flavor of the pills.

Lastly, I grab a cookie. These are saved from lunches from the past few days. Some are pre-packaged, some are made in the kitchen here. My saved cookies, combined with the occasional cookie donations from Starbuck, equal just the right amount for one cookie per day.

So, each morning, between 9 and 9:10, I pull up a seat near the card table in the day room. The others know my routine and accept that I will not engage with them until 10 a.m. I enjoy my coffee, my vitamin, and my cookie in relative peace.

At 9:30 my coffee is done, but the news comes on, so I stay put until 10.

At 10 a.m. the day can officially begin.